

## Hans Knot International Radio Report May 2020

Welcome all to this May edition of the International Radio Report. I've got so many e mails after publishing last report for which I want to thank you so much. Most of you got a personal reply and a choice of reflections regarding Ronan O'Rahilly's passing is in this report. But also a lot of other memories were send to me. First we go to a reader in the Netherlands, Frank van der Heerde, who wrote some of his own memories regarding the sixties and Ronan:

'Yeah, even if we wanted to, we don't have eternal life. Ronan was a bit confused at times, didn't have that kind of business acumen and left the latter almost entirely to Philip Solomon, who had spent quite a bit of money on the repair of the Mi Amigo etc. when that ship ran aground in January 1966. In the beginning of 1966 the Caroline deejays were allowed to go their own way when it came to record selection, which resulted in beautiful radio, especially from the 3rd week of April 1966, when the Mi Amigo was back at sea with a stronger transmitter. But gradually Philip Solomon put his stamp more and more on what was being played.



Mi Amigo in Zaandam 1966 Photo: Rob Olthof

This in the form of payola and from November 1966 mainly in the form of records of his newly founded label Major Minor (the latter on South more than on North). Ronan often spoke against himself. For example Caroline, named after the daughter of the late president Kennedy and that story about managing Georgie Fame is also not true. Anyway, it's all history. But I especially remember Ronan from Saturday morning, March 28, 1964, 9 o'clock in the morning. A milestone for me. When I woke up that morning and used to turn the disk of my transistor towards 192m, I ran into Caroline, which would turn out to be close by. Caroline had started test transmissions. Pop and middle of the road music alternated. Nowhere had I read that there was a new radio station in the pipeline. I was completely over the moon.

Both Easter days the transmitter was on at my place from 6 o'clock till 18.00 o'clock, the last hour disturbed by a heavy whistling sound because a Czechoslovakian transmitter started to come through at 197 metres. Only in the Tuesday paper there was an article about Caroline, in which it was also mentioned that there would soon be another offshore radio station.

Daily Mail 3-4-1964

## Another 'pirate'

Another "pirate" radio ship is being fitted out at the Irish port of Greenore, Co. Louth. It is smaller than the Caroline, now broadcasting off the Suffolk coast, and will be ready by June.

For me the music world was upside down at the time. Because until then there was little pop on the radio during the day, with the exception of a few programmes on Radio Veronica and Hilversum Radio. And in the evening there was happy Luxembourg. With the arrival of even more British offshore stations in the 60's, it was a big party for me. But without O'Rahilly's pioneering work they probably wouldn't have come. Just some thoughts bubbling up at the sad news about Ronan. That's what I wanted to say. Greetings, Frank van Heerde.'

Wonderful and honest written memories Frank, thanks for that. Now we go to Spain. 'Hello Hans and Jana We really want to send our Condolence for Ronan O'Rahilly. He really did leave his mark on the world, and will never be forgotten because of Radio Caroline North and South. Please take care of your self's and stay save. God bless and loads of love. Juliana and Tony Meehan.'

Thanks for these words and hope the both of you will stay out of the Corona Zone. For those not knowing who Tony Meehan is here a link to more information on the Pirate Hall of Fame.

<http://www.offshoreradio.co.uk/djism.htm#meehan>

May 3<sup>rd</sup> the New York Times paid attention to the passing of Ronan:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/03/arts/music/ronan-orahilly-dead.html>

Johnny Lewis is next: 'Hi Hans, I hope your keeping well in these very strange times. All good here. Just wanted to say, enjoying all the stuff you're doing on FB. Also I've not said anything about the passing of Ronan till now, just wanted to keep my thoughts to myself. It hit me hard being the person who broke the sad news on air on Radio Caroline that Monday afternoon. It was the hardest thing I've had to do in over 40 years broadcasting. It was something both Peter Moore and me did not want to get wrong. It was just 20 minutes from the time I was given the news of Ronan's death to the

time I went live on air. Ronan, was an inspiration, a true leader, so passionate about Caroline, and a believer.

He made me always feel very wanted and made me believe in myself, he changed my life for the better at the age of 18, and said those words, I'm sure he's said to many, "you could be the next Tony Blackburn" but hey I did not care, I was on the love of my life, Radio Caroline. That was 1978, now 42 years later thanks to Ronan I've made a great career and life, and all thanks to him. As Johnny Walker said "Ronan made the impossible possible" I for one have so much to thank this pioneer of Radio in the UK for. I'm happy if you want to use the above in one of your fine reports. Hope to see you when all this virus stuff is over.



Ronan Photo: Martin van der Ven

Thanks a lot Johnny for the emotional warm message. I heard the program and it was really touching and it was the right person to present it too. Here all is well and yes there must be somewhere someday a change to meet up again. Keep enjoying radio as much as I do. Warm greetings Hans

Not far away from where Johnny Lewis is living another radio friend since 42 has his house. Bob LeRoi. He wrote: 'Without Caroline therefore without Ronan, Commercial Radio in the UK would probably

have taken another three decades to appear. Ever since Radio's inception in 1920's the British Government has been terrified of unregulated broadcasting. Ronan took a Continental practice and with considerable effort made it his own for British listeners deprived of music radio entertainment. When the Marine Offences Bill became law in 1967, Ronan insisted Caroline to continue. When things got really tough and the ships seized, a worse for wear Mi-Amigo bravely returned to sea.

Her demise to the elements in 1980 seemed to signal the end of British 'Offshore' Radio. But another Caroline nautical chapter opened in 1983 with Laser turning up a short time later causing an uproar. Ultimately Laser was starved into submission by a UK Government blockade and Caroline was left alone to get in with it. Finally thwarted by the 1990 Broadcasting Act, Caroline would never be the same again. I started my long career on the Radio City which wouldn't have come about without Ronan's inspiration.



Photo collection Bob LeRoi

In the intervening years my flirtatious with Caroline have been long and many, from supplying, furnishing kit, and presentation. I like many owe my career to Ronan, a larger than life character often

arguing the impossible was feasible, and one way or another made it happen. The travesty is that mainstream media have barely mentioned his passing. Perhaps the BBC will produce a fitting tribute. Then again maybe not. Here's to Ronan's memory a true Radio Pioneer. Take care, stay safe - Bob Le-Roi

[www.bobleroi.co.uk](http://www.bobleroi.co.uk)

<https://www.npr.org/2020/05/09/853217003/remembering-radio-caroline-founder-ronan-o-rahilly-a-pioneer-of-pirate-radio?t=1589129940202>

From England we go to the USA and Allan Weiner with his memories: 'Hi Hans. So sad to hear of the loss of the true leader of Free radio in the world Ronan O'Rahilly. I met Ronan in the winter of 1985 in a small pub in London. We had a wonderful discussion about radio and one of his passions- Loving Awareness. At the time I was in process of outfitting a radioship to anchor off the coast of New York City. To be known as Radio New York International. We talked about this at length. Ronan was a true radio inspiration and hero to me. He even suggested to call the New York radioship 'Radio Caroline' as it is universal to what free radio is. Ronan truly changed the radio world bringing great music, hope and freedom to a uncertain world. He will be missed and his legacy will last as long as the radio electromagnetic emanations last-forever! RIP dear free radio broadcaster. Allan Weiner, WBCQ Radio.'



Another Caroline long time presenter is Nigel McArthur aka Stuart Russell, who wrote to me some personal notes to: 'Ronan O'Rahilly, founder of Radio Caroline, died on Monday 20th April, 2020. Ronan, you had much to say on many subjects, but here are just a few of your thoughts. Rest In Peace, Ronan. Many try to imitate you - none are successful, nor will they be. With love from Nigel aka Stuart Russell, the fellow you once said was too shy to be famous - you were quite right!

And I'll never forget, on my first shore-leave from the Mi Amigo, you told me to be myself in life, whatever people thought or said about me. To this day, I try my best and will try even harder now. And I'm sorry for driving you through a red light in London and scaring you rigid! But you did say you had a meeting at seven! Nonetheless, I remember very well that you were not impressed. And sorry too for getting us lost in Essex trying to get you home one evening. Ronan, I'll never forget you. xxxx Ronan O'Rahilly 1940-2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Eq-GxckonY>

Next on the internet site from Radio Kaleidoscope

<http://www.bookamook.com/kaleidoscope/ships-radio-pirates-various/radio-caroline/ronan-orahilly-21may40-20apr20/>

Next to Phil C, who wrote: 'My friend Mr. Knot, I have enjoyed getting your newsletters for a long time, but never did this 70 year old man cry at one. This new one attributing Ronan O'Rahilly grabbed me in the chest like no other. I remember reading about Caroline back in 1964 when it started. Burying myself as a teen in all sorts of radio related periodicals, I had my fingers on the pulse of the industry, even building my first radio transmitter out of a GE clock radio. This was 1968. I will be 71 on May 17th this year. Wow. I only did that one other time in my life and will never do it again; 17 on the 17th.....and 71 (reversal) on the coming 17th. By the way, if you've never seen this TV programme from 1965, enjoy:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jO42aYB6\\_8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jO42aYB6_8Q)

I guess you know you only have to put Ronan's name in YouTube to find a plethora of stuff on the man. That said, I will weep just as much when Hans passes. I hope that's a long, long time from now. You are the very best at doing what you're doing and I hope all your other subscribers agree and stick with you till the end. All the best my friend. I will keep this particular backed up on multiple external hard drives so nothing can ever happen to it! I'll even read it again from time to time. It's the best (though sad) Knotletter I ever got. Phil Colaianni.'

Thanks a lot Phil I'm really touched with your words. Indeed I want to live for many more years. On the other hand we don't have it in our hands ourselves. We see it these days with this alarming virus. Lucky we live in a part of the Netherlands where the virus is not heavy spread. So stay healthy as possible and enjoy more reports as possible. By the way all reports from 2004 up till the last one are on [www.hanknot.com](http://www.hanknot.com)

Paul Rusling has made an update to his Caroline Bible. Here a short part of the update regarding the passing of Ronan O'Rahilly:

'Ronan's new partner, Ines Rocha, took him to a succession of specialists and tried to arrange suitable treatments. They left London to live back in Ireland and took a seafront apartment in Bettystown. There, Ronan and Ines enjoyed long walks by the sea, playing an occasional round of golf and going horse racing. His doctor recommended long chats with friends, but it was difficult in such a remote place, though he continued to pursue one of his favourite hobbies which was talking on the telephone.

Ronan was finally diagnosed to be suffering from vascular dementia, caused by restricted blood flow to the brain. This gradually causes problems with mental ability and eventually brain damage, explaining how he gradually became unable to communicate sufficiently well. He had to move into a nursing home near the banks of Carlingford Lough where he could receive the care that his condition demands. Ronan continued to listen to Caroline and Ines would read to him each

day after he found even this difficult. His telephone chats became noticeably shorter and he lost track of conversations and time. During 2019 he grew more distant as his mind became weaker however, he still ate well and had no physical problems. Ines took him out, usually to see his niece Vanessa, who lived nearby and they would sit in the garden or in his room at the nursing home, playing his favourite music.

A mass was held for Ronan at St James' church in Grange, where Father Malachy Conlon conducted the service, which was watched by thousands on a webcast. Ronan's partner, Ines, then scattered the flowers from his coffin from the quayside at Greenore, where the Caroline ships had been fitted out in 1964.



Ines Rocha with the flowers in Rocha. Photo with thanks to Paul Rusling

For more details go to

<https://RadioCarolineBible.com>

And now Patrick Healy: 'Hi Hans. Many thanks for the latest special issue of the report. At this very sad time it was great to read how well remembered and well thought of Ronan was. He made the editorial of one of the national newspapers here in Ireland the Irish Examiner. Link is below.

[Irish Examiner View: A legend of pop music industry - The late Ronan O'Rahilly](#)

Keep up the good work. Regards Patrick'.

And Stephen Raindle: 'Hello Hans I wonder if I may add my own recollections of Ronan O'Rahilly, who I met once albeit briefly. The 1968 Free Radio Rally in Trafalgar Square on a sultry Saturday 17th August culminated in a march on 10 Downing Street, the residence of our mutual nemesis, Prime Minister Harold Wilson. A huge crowd of several thousand protestors was milling around the area and I suddenly realised I was standing almost next to Ronan O'Rahilly.

I said to a friend I was with, "It's Ronan" to which he replied: "No, it's not, but it does look like him", then added: "You're right, it is him". We said hello to Ronan and spoke briefly but by then word of his presence had spread and people were clamoring for his autograph. The scene was rudely interrupted by a burly red faced police officer who forced his way through the crowd, pointed the index finger of his brown leather gloved hand at Ronan and bellowed: "Home, you, you're causing trouble".

In his soft Irish brogue Ronan replied he was doing nothing of the sort. At this, the police officer shouted at Ronan: "If you don't leave I'll have you arrested". Instantly, my friend, a DJ known as Keith St B, shouted to a girl standing next to the angry policeman: "Don't stand for that, knock his hat off". It was meant as a joke but taken literally and the young lady, whom neither of us knew, reacted and with one swing of her arm the police officer's peaked cap was sent

flying. All hell was let loose. The crowd cheered, the policeman blew his whistle and called for assistance in order to make arrests.



Photo from that happening in 1968. Photo Archive ICCE.RUG

In the excitement Ronan disappeared, faded away into the crowd and we didn't even see the direction he had gone. Police reinforcements ploughed into the crowd but were powerless to do much in the crush of massed Free Radio supporters. Keith and I made a surreptitious retreat. An interesting Saturday afternoon that remains in my memory as clear as the day it happened almost 52 years ago. Farewell Ronan and thanks for Radio Caroline. With best wishes Stephen Raindle.'

Indeed a very interesting memory to share with my readers after more than 5 decades. Thanks a lot Stephen.

Philip Tagon from Belgium wrote: 'After the death of Ronan and of course because of your extra International Radio Report I searched the internet and found a radio documentary "The Pirate Port - Newstalk 106-108 - April 21st 2014".

Documentary about the port of Greenore, Co Louth, and its part in the story of Radio Caroline.

Presented by Declan Meehan.

*Written and produced by Trevor Dann. Funded by the BAI.*

<https://soundcloud.com/trevordann-1/the-pirate-port-newstalk-106-108-april-21st-2014>

A lot of known stories/business but there is also the story of the then only employee of Greenore Port, Olive French when the MV Fredericia suddenly lay on the quay unannounced and a lot of unfamiliar stories for me, but which you might know. Greetings and thanks again for your monthly report. Philip.'



Next an e mail came in from John Wolfert in Dallas: 'Everyone at JAM and PAMS in Dallas hope that you and your family are doing OK in this difficult time. Because of the Covid-19 situation we are not able to have recording sessions until it is safe to do so. Like so many others, we are doing our best to work from home.

Since you may also be spending time in quarantine, and you are a user or fan of our jingles, we want to pass along a couple of fun listening suggestions to help pass the time..



Rewound Radio is an online station playing music from the '50s through the '80s. It's designed for people who enjoyed the sound of top-40 radio in that era. Besides playing the best commercial-free music 24/7, the station also makes great use of the best PAMS and JAM jingles on the internet. For almost two years Jon Wolfert

(president of JAM) has done a live show every Sunday from 3-6 PM Eastern. It's more than a DJ show because each show contains "Jingle Time" segments where you'll hear lots of memorable jingles and commercials from all over, along with the stories behind them. To listen, just click the link to visit the home page, where you can use their built-in player or find other ways to listen including TuneIn and Alexa. <https://rewoundradio.com/>

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If you are a fan of radio history, WABC New York, or its jingles, you should know that in December 2019 we produced a definitive history of the jingles used by 77 WABC during its days as a music station. The project was a labor of love (but it was a lot of labor!). The entire production is available for streaming or downloading from the JAM website here <http://www.jingles.com/jam/fans/wabchistory.html>

We hope some of this audio brings a smile to your day. Please continue to be careful and stay well! Best wishes, Your friends at JAM.'

Well a wonderful surprise and I spent a lot of time listening to the material on the site. Thanks a lot to Jon Wolfert and his team.

Next it's Phil Crosby: Dear Sir Hans. Thank you for this special edition. A very sad event. Of course I did a small special segment on my radio show here in Australia on Saturday. For some years I have been asking the BBC programme "Desert Island Discs" to have Ronan on the show. He would have made a wonderful subject for that program. But of course the BBC did not reply. Old grudges run deep in that organisation. Hans, do you get the ITV (UK) 2020 television

series of Van der Valk? There are three episodes. In the third episode, the action scenes towards the end are all filmed on the REM island in Amsterdam. It's quite exciting, and great to see the old REM island used for the re-make of a popular TV series. Kind regards (Aussie) Phil.'

Thanks a lot for all the information Phil. The series is not on tv in Holland and we also cannot receive ITV. But in the meantime I heard that in the second week of May this 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter was shown. In 1976 also an episode of the German Crime series 'Tatort' was filmed on the island <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IU85EX6XZEK>

Next attention for a booklet written by Steve Marshall, who has a long career in radio. Starting in landbased pirate radio he worked for countless stations in several countries. Here is the first page:

**From Moonrock to Marshall, a life in International Broadcasting.**

From tower blocks in London, radio ships in the Middle East, and radio stations across the island of Ireland and Europe. My life has involved a lot of moving, working and living in many countries. I have worked with, and lived with some amazing people. My life to date has been full of adventure, fun and some interesting times. I thought about writing this book for a long time, then a friend of mine suggested it might help someone get into broadcasting, and inspire them.

This book is dedicated to the people who have and continue to inspire me. My family. To Tony Johns, Peter St Crispian, Bob Tomalski, Steve Chandler, Andy Jackson, Alan Moore, John White and all the Radio Invicta 92.4fm family. Keith York, mentor, workmate, and dear friend.

Marc Storey who is probably the oldest friend I have, Marc and I have known each other forever. Marc has introduced me to some amazing people and music over the years. To my business partner, and friend Gerry D. In the words of my old workmate, and friend

Tony Allan. "You can do anything you want to do, get off your arse and do something."

Chapter 1 I Want To Be In The Movies. I come from a musical family, my father was a well-known classical musician, who helped change the sound, and style of early music over the years. He also inspired a thirst for knowledge in music, and current affairs, and many other interests. I suppose I have always had an interest how things work, when I was very young, around 10 years old. I was given an 8mm movie projector. Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, Harold Lloyd and others graced my home movie screen. I also hired films from the Southall Film Library. A bit later on, I had a movie camera, for home movies, involving members of my family, and friends. In the early 1970's, I went to the Roundhouse on Saturday mornings to a kids thing called "Moonrock".

Run by a man called John Gravelle, it involved lots of very loud rock music, inflatables, and classic movies. Plus a wonderful African music group, led by Ginger Johnson. I remember dancing in the street, outside Camden Studios, in Camden Town. Jonathan Parks who was the man who showed the classic movies, took me under his wing.



Steve Marshall Photo: Pat Galvin

Jonathan, an engineer by trade, helped design some of the amazing figures for Pink Floyd and others. My brother and I, and a friend went to see some great shows at the Roundhouse, including Le Grand Magic Circus. and so on' Interested to read more? Order you own

copy versus this link: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Moonrock-Marshall-life-International-Broadcasting-ebook/dp/B07VSRVH2V>

Thanks a lot Steve for sharing the first page and hope your booklet will bring some joy for people who will order their own copy.

As usual an update from Jon and the Pirate Hall of Fame:

New this month:

- offshore engineer Phil Perkins remembers joining the early pirate station, Radio Invicta;
- Steve England provides a rare recording of his friend Leon Tipler during Leon's very brief spell on Radio City;
- Stevie Lane shares some photos she took on Radio Caroline in 1983/4;
- and, since the last monthly update, I have added a tribute to Caroline founder Ronan O'Rahilly who died on 20th April at the age of 79.

Take care, Jon

[www.offshoreradio.co.uk](http://www.offshoreradio.co.uk)

Next an e mail from Cambridge, the lovely university town I visited several times: 'Dear Hans Knot, You've a fantastic web site. Tons of great memories. My favourite stations were: When very young, Caroline North (which seemed so professional), Radio 270, Swinging Radio England. Then in later years definitely RNI. Some years ago, I had a trip to the Ross Revenge in Tilbury Dock.

Your primary website I look at is: <https://www.hansknot.com/> which has all the links at the top of the home page.

You have some great photos on there. On in particular which shows excellent detail of Veronica's "T" antenna after the move to the bottom of the band. The five conductors of the horizontal section are clearly visible. What a shame RNI didn't start lower down the

band and at lower power instead of the 186m fiasco - it would have been a less controversial start-up.

University of Twente web SDR shows MW increasingly empty. A few Dutch pirates on 1611 (Radio Utopia) and 1640 kHz this morning. The once overcrowded 49m is nearly empty due to declining interest in short wave and very poor propagation (critical frequency too low, hurting NVIS propagation). Even the pirates have deserted 48m!

Keep up the great work and best regards, Robert Dennison,  
Cambridge, England. '

Thanks for the warm words Robert and keep enjoying our websites.

In our new facebook group from the Foundation for media communication <https://www.facebook.com/groups/smcfbspot/>

which was started on Easter Monday and has now around 1000 members, many memories are shared as well as photographs and more. One day there we some people, who had worked for the Voice of Peace, remembering Captain Aaldijk. This after I posted this photograph:



Aaldijk photo: Chris Cooper

Surely this man may not be forgotten in the history of offshore radio. He was a long time captain from the Netherlands on the Voice of Peace, captain Aaldijk.

**Neil Armstrong** Yes Capitan Aaldijk. We once had a very drunken night out in Tel Aviv during one of his rare moments on shore as he used to spend many weeks onboard the ship. He could certainly drink. We went out to an Indian restaurant and then to the VOP DJs regular watering hole a bar called 'The White House'. He was downing pint after pint and I was having difficulty keeping up with him. He seemed perfectly sober at the end of this session. Me I was absolutely legless.

**Johnny Lewis** He went back to Holland while I was still onboard, but I believe he came back to the ship in 1981, but I was working in Dublin then. Another great guy around when I was on board was Bill Bennett, he had some great tails to tell. Spent some time down in the engine room with Bill on trips to and from Ashdod and never had a problem with him. But that might have been because I could help out in the engine room and when underway on the bridge. Sometimes the VOP does get overlooked, but, had it been on air with that format from the North Sea, what an impact it would have had. But then again, would it have been the same, the VOP was unique, and a great station in the right place at the right time.

**Steve Marshall:** Bill Bennett was a brilliant man, full of some great stories. We used to share books to read as well. I will never forget those times, learnt a lot about radio and about life too. Spent my shore leave exploring the country, some great places and people. One of the best days I had on that ship was the Captain allowing me to steer the ship. Nice man.

**Tim Scrimshaw** So Aaldijk was certainly there in 1986-1987. It was quite rare that he'd leave the ship, usually only for Christmas and his wife's birthday. I got on pretty well with him. He'd always complained that the old Decca radar didn't work. Eventually Abie sent out a small yacht radar. It sat in boxes for a few weeks waiting

for an installer that never came out. So I decided to have a go at it. I made up a mounting plate, nearly losing a fingertip in the process, and got the antenna mounted on top of the bridge in place of the old DF loop. Hooked it up, switched on and it worked. I was pretty pleased with myself and went to fetch the captain. He took one look and said "Foch! That's just a toy!" and walked away. But I seem to recall he did actually use the radar on our next trip to Ashdod. He was probably quite capable of navigating by the stars anyway



Abe with captain Aaldijk on the left

Photo: unknown

**Keith Lewis** Everything you expect a Dutch seaman to be and a heavy smoker of Van Nelle half zware shag. A real sea dog

**Chris Garrod** He didn't like the DJs. (like most radio ship Captains). I remember I got a right bullocking off of him, when I went up to the bridge and turned on the shortwave radio to have a listen around. I didn't know it was his own personal radio. I thought it was for everyone to use. I think it was a Yaesu FRG 7 but can't remember. He went absolutely ballistic at me, and even reported me to Abe, who spoke to me the next day and explained to me that it was the Captain's own personal radio, that he used to listen to Haifa marine radio to listen to the shipping forecast in morse code. Afterwards we all had a laugh about it, and the other members of the crew said they had never seen the Captain in such a rage. I must admit after

that one occasion he did take a liking to me, only because I knew quite a bit about ships, and knew my Port from my Starboard, and about navigation lights, etc. A couple of times he asked me to help out on the bridge. Especially during bad weather I was acting as a lookout.

Thanks boys for your memories. It's hard to believe it's already 14 years ago we had this wonderful reunion in Amsterdam.



Photo: Peace ship in Amsterdam. Photo: Marishdata.nl

Next we go back to the mysterious person named Rolf van Brandtzaeg, which in the last three reports was mentioned and we we're looking for more information. Recently I got an email from the daughter from Wyck Gerson Lohman and she told me to contact him as he could tell me more about Rolf. And so I did.

He wrote back a very long answer: 'Wyck Gerson Lohman is my name and you don't have to call me sir! On April 10th I was indeed to be in the Netherlands for a reunion of my elementary school class (in the early fifties), but of course that didn't happen and so we had some

email contact instead and I wrote the following (in the meantime slightly adjusted) to my daughter Natasha. Within minutes Natasha found the clip below of how Rolf's girlfriend, Ronan, Rolf and I had been chasing Wilson (and apparently preceded him at the last moment). So I took the picture of Glenna, Rolf's girlfriend then, Ronan, Rolf and me.

What I'm writing here is no secret, so you can use it, especially if it would help to track down Rolf. I've tried to google him many times, but never found anything. So here more about him and Radio Caroline.

One of my fellow students at the photography school was a Swede. His name was Rolf van Brandtzaeg. I don't know where that Dutch-looking "from" came from. He lived in England for quite some time and spoke quite 'posh' English, but with a light Swedish accent. He had a red sports car, an MG, and every now and then I went with him to take some pictures on location. Then he suggested that he would take care of a siege, if I brought a couple of presents. The Ambassador of Sweden was a friend of his. He had his favorite delicacies come over from Sweden regularly. If he had anything left, he often passed it on to Rolf. Sometimes the siege consisted of Crayfish or Caviar.

After school I kept in touch with him. At one point he turned out to be one of the founders of Radio Caroline. Although everything was broadcast from the pirate ship, most of the programmes, including interviews with artists, were recorded in 'Caroline House', an old multistore villa in Chesterfield Gardens, Mayfair, one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in the 'West End'. Once Radio Caroline was up and running, Rolf occupied the upper floor where he set up a beautiful photo studio, which I was also allowed to use. That's how I became a make-up and fashion photographer, despite the fact that I had never been and still am not interested in a nut for fashion. I told myself it was an advantage if you, as a fashion photographer, didn't know anything about fashion. Then you would always be fresh and

neutral towards every garment to be photographed, which made you all the better able to make it look at its best.

I still believe there is a truth to this statement. If I looked at my work decades later, I could rightly conclude that my sixties and seventies photographs were less 'dated', even than those of the most famous photographers of that time. Unfortunately I can't prove that now, since all my work went up in flames in 2009.

The fact that our studio was located there meant of course that you met several pop stars and I also made a number of record sleeves for various singers and groups from that time. I became friends with Hilton Valentine, 'lead guitarist' of 'the Animals'. When they moved from Newcastle to London they rented an apartment together, but at some point rooms became available because some of them moved in on their own and so I moved in with them.



One day I was approached by their bass guitarist, Chas Chandler - who wasn't particularly a friend of mine - if I could take some pictures for him of a new talent he had brought over from America and of whom he was now manager. So I spent a few days with a friendly Afro-American guy with a pretty wild hair. Preferably I would have photographed him with his upper body exposed, because that really suited him, but that wasn't allowed. Before he came to England he had played in the backing-group of Little Richard, who had underpaid him and therefore he was slightly malnourished.

At that time 'Ready, Steady, Go,' was undoubtedly the most watched TV show in the whole GB. Almost all Brits watched it weekly. It was every aspiring pop star's dream to debut on that programme.



On the night in question, Hilton Valentine, Eric Burdon, the girlfriend of the new talent and I were sitting in front of the television waiting for his first performance. Half an hour later, he was the talk of the evening in almost every family all over the country. The pop star's name was Jimmy Hendrix.

The founder of Radio Caroline was an Irishman. His name was Ronan O'Rahilly and in appearance he could easily have been a Kennedy, a twin brother of Bobby Kennedy. He worshipped John Kennedy who had been murdered a few years before. On Ronan's desk was a gigantic bust of John Kennedy and the name 'Radio Caroline' was chosen because that was Kennedy's daughter's name. He could tell you everything about the murder of John Kennedy, everything nobody knew, not even those who tried to find out the facts of the murder and when you asked him how he knew all that, he would look at you very tightly and answer: 'Because I was there!', this in a tone of: don't you see who you have in front of you: John Kennedy, that's me!



<https://youtu.be/A4H-wMA80gM>

The Cavern Club in Liverpool was where the Beatles originally were the house band before they became famous. Later that club was closed, but on 23 July 1966 a new Cavern Club was founded and was to be opened by Prime Minister Harold Wilson. Ronan O'Rahilly hated Harold Wilson from the bottom of his heart, because Wilson was preparing a bet to close all the offshore radio stations.

Nevertheless, Ronan, Rolf and I decided to go to the opening. When we got on the train and looked for a seat, we walked past Harold Wilson who was sitting there, surrounded by a group of women. He just traveled second class, without a security guard or something, because that wasn't necessary at the time. As soon as we were out of his sight and hearing Ronan really started foaming: 'I could kill

that man! Luckily he didn't, but when we arrived in Liverpool, we had no idea where to go, so we just followed Harold Wilson and his retinue, who guided us to the right place. The next evening I was called from Amsterdam by Frank Hony, some of you might know. He asked, "What on earth were you doing in Harold Wilson's retinue? He'd seen me on the Dutch news.

After Radio Caroline's ship was finally detained, Ronan O'Rahilly set up an agency for actors. Originally, that went very well. Even one of the James Bonds, George Lazenby, was registered with him. Unfortunately, Lazenby only starred in one James Bond film. Ronan thought the time for James Bond was up, old hat! He'd better look for another role. Roger Moore, who then played in 7 James Bond movies, was very happy with the advice his predecessor received. Ronan, unfortunately, passed away on 20 April 2020).

Afterword:

A week after 'the Animals' went on tour in Sweden, two Swedish girls knocked at the door, Lotte and Yvonne. Chas Chandler and Hilton Valentine had given them their addresses. A year later Lotte and Chas were married, but the relationship between Hilton and Yvonne didn't last long. I stayed in touch with her even after she moved to Wimbledon where she moved in with Gip, whom she later married. Gip was the best friend of pop singer Donovan. Meanwhile, in 'the summer of love', 1967, at the first wedding of my brother Antoine, I had met Toej, my partner.

Back in London, a friend of mine asked me if I wanted to come along, via Amsterdam, to Sweden. I asked Toej if she wanted to come with me, but she was at work, so I decided to stay with her in Amsterdam to be picked up on the way back. But Yvonne and Gip did go with me to Sweden. That's how Toej met Yvonne in Amsterdam. If Yvonne saw something she liked or liked, like a coloured cake or something, she tended to point at it and shout with a high voice: 'I want that

one...' . Toej, who is a good imitator, could imitate that perfectly and for years after that she did the occasional 'Yvonne'.

Our daughter, Natasha, had regularly heard and seen her do that and knew that it was the Swedish Yvonne she had never met. At the age of 15 she had a summer job in 'the Quarry Café', an alternative café in Machynlleth, connected to 'the Centre for Alternative Technology'. Machynlleth is more than 350 km from London, where I knew Yvonne. At one point a middle-aged lady appears before her. She points at a coloured cake and says in a high-pitched voice: 'I want that one. "Is your name Yvonne, by any chance?" asks Natasha. And truthfully, it was her.'

Well thanks a lot Wyck Gerson Lohman for these memories and it's far much more we knew till now about Rolf, who is now a less mysterious person than a few months back for the radio friends.

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## OFFSHORE ECHOS MAGAZINE - RONAN O'RAHILLY TRIBUTE



The 200<sup>th</sup> edition of OFFSHORE ECHOS MAGAZINE will be entirely devoted to the figurehead of Radio Caroline - Ronan O'Rahilly.

OEM 200 features interviews with Ronan, numerous pictures, news reports, as well as anecdotes and tributes from family, friends and

colleagues including Georgie Fame, Roisin O'Rahilly, Tony Blackburn, Emperor Rosko, Fred Bolland, Peter Chicago, Robb Eden, Mike Hagler, Ronnie Jones, Johnny Lewis, Paul McKenna, Colin Nicol, Peter Philips and many more. All over 60 pages, dedicated to the man who changed the face of the radio world in Europe.

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Offshore Echo's magazine no. 200 is due out in mid-June.

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Let us see the beautiful photos from Paul en Fedro Krooshof  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72157711978760616>

Frenk Kokkelkoren did send two links related to New Zealand and Radio Hauraki:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqUTkpuHhHM&feature=emb\\_rel\\_end](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqUTkpuHhHM&feature=emb_rel_end)

<https://stevehilliar.com/portfolio-item/radio-hauraki/>

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## **The SS Malolo and Captain Dobbsie**

How an early offshore radio station ended up in Hawaii in 1931

by Jan van Heeren

For those who have a feeling for the history of radio and more specifically for the history of the offshore radio stations, it is interesting when something emerges from the distant past that has something to do with it, even if it is sideways. This certainly applies to the broadcasts that were made in 1926 from the ocean steamer SS Malolo. Jan van Heeren tells more about it here.

### **Back in time.**

Already in the twenties and thirties of the last century radio programs were emitted from ships. Hans Knot (1993; 1998) described earlier among others the examples of the HMS Andromeda and the MV Kanimbla. We can now add to that list the SS Malolo - a name that appeared in old radio magazines of 1931, such as Broadcast Weekly (1931a; 1931b; 1931c) and Radio Doings (Nunan, 1931). What's this all to do with? For an answer to that question we first make a leap back in time to the year 1926. Ocean steamer/ cruise ship SS Malolo is launched in Philadelphia. It is a very luxurious ship that sails the route San Francisco, Los Angeles and Honolulu and contributes to the popularity of Hawaii as a tourist island. Soon after entering service, in 1927, the ship collided with a cargo ship, causing damage similar to that of the Titanic fifteen years earlier. Due to a well-functioning compartment system, the ship was able to safely enter the port under its own power, albeit with 6,000 tons of seawater on board.



**Hugh Barret Dobbs**

It was not only the Malolo that saw the light of day in 1926. The radio programme "Ship of Joy" also started in that year at broadcaster KPO, daily between eight and nine o'clock in the morning, with the exception of Sunday. It is, apart from KPO, also heard by a large number of other broadcasters in syndicated form on the West Coast of America. "Ship of Joy" is an imitation of an already existing popular program: "Maxwellhouse Show Boat". The new program is presented by Hugh Barrett Dobbs. He already has radio experience, especially as a presenter of a morning gymnastics program. Those gymnastics broadcasts, sponsored by Quaker Oats, were very popular. "Ship of Joy" also became a sponsored program. Initially the company Del Monte was a sponsor, after that it became Shell, which changed the name to "Shell Ship of Joy". The program was broadcast via the NBC Pacific Coast network.

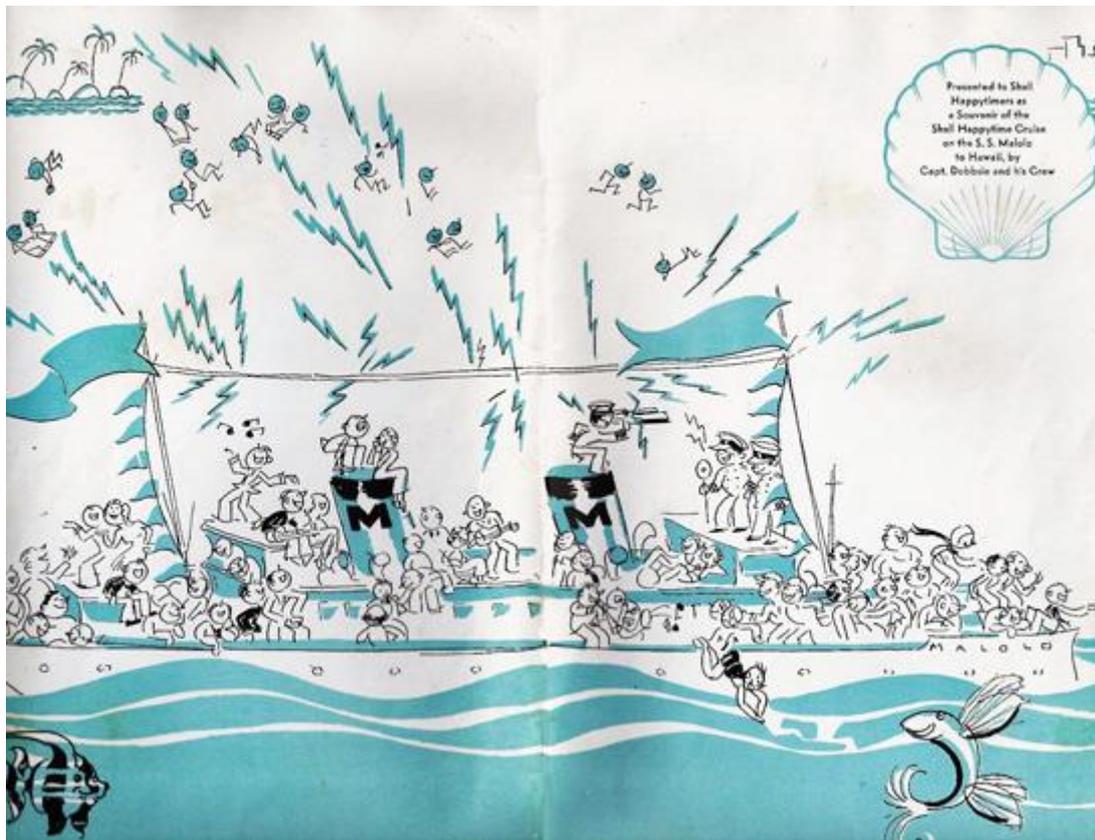


**SS Malolo**

The popularity of the program was shown by the salary Dobbs received. It was said to be more than President Hoover's. (In the period 1929 to 1932 he collected almost a quarter of a million US dollars through Shell). Another indication of his popularity was that Dobbs received almost two million letters from listeners in six years. The listeners of "Ship of Joy" were called "shipmates" or "happytimers" and Dobbs himself became Captain Dobbsie.

## By ship to Hawaii.

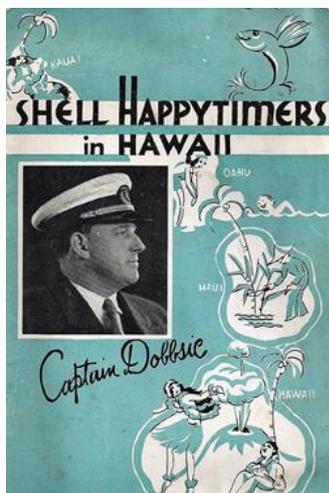
The two events of 1926, the launching of the SS Malolo and the start of the radio program "Ship of Joy", would come together a few years later. At the beginning of 1930 a top man of Shell, E.H. Sanders, thought it would be nice to have the programme "Ship of Joy" actually broadcast from a ship for once. It took almost a year and a half before everything was complete in terms of technology, permits and finances. But finally, on Friday July 11, 1931, the SS Malolo left at the Golden Gate of San Francisco in the direction of Honolulu, Hawaii. During this voyage Captain Dobbsie would take care of his morning program "Shell Ship of Joy" every day from the ship.



The ship was conducted by thousands of listeners. On board were among others Captain Dobbsie, two radio technicians, twenty artists and a large number of fans of the program. A temporary radio studio was set up on the ship. The 200 Watt shortwave transmitter received the call letters WIOXAI and could broadcast on 9670 and 6020 kHz. The transmitter had already been tested during an earlier

voyage. The transmissions would be relayed over the entire NBC Pacific Coast network. At the time, the press reported that it was the first time in the history of radio that a seafaring radio station provided regular broadcasts during a voyage across the Pacific Ocean, with these broadcasts being distributed via a network of radio stations.

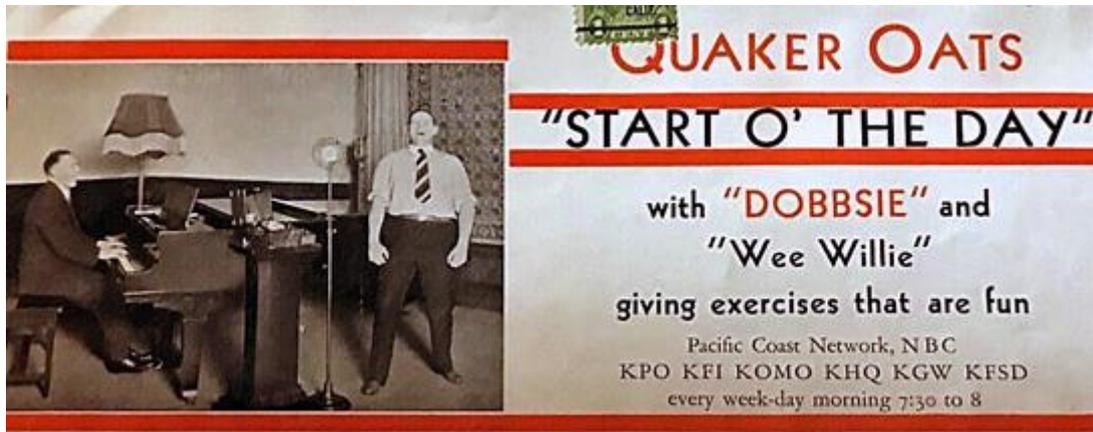
On July 16th the ship arrived at Hawaii. There the mayor welcomed Captain Dobbsie and handed him the key to the city. From Hawaii the broadcasts continued, but not, as one would have liked, from the Malolo, but simply from land. Yet again, this was not so commonplace, because it was another first: these were the first broadcasts from Hawaii aimed at America. The Friday evening that they stayed in Hawaii, not only the morning program "Shell Ship of Joy" was broadcasted there, but there was also a special evening broadcast with local artists. The 18th of July the return journey was accepted, with the ship again being waved off by thousands. Also on the way back the program "Ship of Joy" was broadcasted daily.



**How did the story end?**

The Malolo was thoroughly rebuilt in 1937. During the Second World War it was requisitioned and later returned to the shipping company. In 1948 the last trip to Hawaii was made with the ship which came into Italian hands. In 1977, on a Greek shipbreaking yard, the demolition started of the Queen Fredrica, a name that it bore since

1954 and that was named after the then queen of Greece. (Coincidentally, the name of Radio Caroline's first ship, the Fredericia, is often wrongly written as "Frederica").



All the companies that sponsored the programs of Dobbs about ninety years ago still exist today, which is quite remarkable: Quaker, Del Monte and Shell. With Shell there is immediately a Dutch/British connection to the early broadcasts from the sea.

After the broadcasts via the NBC Pacific Coast network, Shell "Ship of Joy" was broadcasted for a period of time by the Columbia West Coast network and then by KOMO Seattle. At the end of each broadcast of "Ship of Joy" Captain Dobbsie asked the listeners to put their hand on the heart and made the following request: "Send out a wish to somebody - somewhere - who may be in sickness or trouble. Everybody - WISH!" Dobbs was concerned about the health of others, but didn't know his own health was bad. It was in 1944 that the at that time perhaps richest radio presenter in the world suddenly died. Captain Dobbsie was only fifty years old at that time.

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Thanks a lot for this interesting article to Jan van Heeren. It ends this edition of the Hans Knot International Report and of course I will be back with another edition at the end of June. In the meantime stay healthy and when you want to share memories, photos and more than you can send it to [HKnot@home.nl](mailto:HKnot@home.nl)